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ABSTRACT

Intended to assist the criminal justice administrator in his/her analysis of how dollars are being spent for training, this monograph summarizes current thinking regarding training needs analysis. Chapter 1 briefly covers the purposes of needs assessment, the short versus long range perspectives, and job analysis. In chapter 2 some questions regarding performance are presented in a decision-tree fashion. Several alternatives to training are provided as solutions to performance problems. The third chapter briefly describes the different needs determination methods, listing advantages and disadvantages of each. The final chapter discusses the concepts of needs analysis, data analysis, and cost/benefit analysis. (YLB)

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TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

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INTRODUCTION

The number of criminal justice training courses has grown in the past several years, and few would question that this is a healthy trend. The development of agency personnel is critical in the rapidly changing environment affecting today's criminal justice organizations. However, the expenditure of millions of dollars demands close scrutiny. Training is an investment.

In viewing training as an investment, the historical fact is that criminal justice training has not been viewed very favorably. This unfavorable status is due to a number of causes, but the "faddish" nature of many training courses and the number of seemingly "unnecessary" training courses are primarily responsible. Funding agencies and responsible administrators are starting to ask for justification for the training dollar.

Effective assessment of training needs can produce that justification and largely eliminate these "hit-and-run" training courses. "Hit-and-run" courses are those efforts which originate from nowhere; conclude without anyone acknowledging accountability; and "leave the organization as a victim." The belief that training can't hurt, whether it is needed or not, is wrong. If an organization does not benefit directly or indirectly from the training, the organization suffers. Training is not free. It is an expenditure which must show some sort of return, and therefore, accurate needs assessment is critical. A needs assessment is necessary when there is a perceived discrepancy between the desired and the actual performance (see Figure One).

This monograph will summarize the most current thinking regarding training needs analysis. This should assist the criminal justice administrator in his/her analysis of how dollars are being spent for training. It is written in a way to maximize its utility. Each chapter stands on its own, or for a complete comprehension of training needs, the entire monograph should be read.

FIGURE ONE

IDEAL PERFORMANCE
DISCREPANCY
ACTUAL PERFORMANCE
LEADS TO
FOCUS OF ATTENTION

In Chapter One, the purposes of needs assessment, the short versus long range perspectives, and job analysis are covered briefly. This is intended to furnish a background for the administrator on needs assessment. The job analysis segment of this chapter is of particular significance because of the implications not only for training, but also for performance evaluation, compensation, and job design and selection.

For the administrator who is only interested in solving a performance problem, Chapter Two is the place to begin. Here some critical questions regarding performance are presented in a decision-tree fashion. Several alternatives to training are presented as solutions to performance problems. The easy answer is "Let's train;" the most correct, and less expensive, answer may be "Let's re-assign," Let's set goals," etc.

The third chapter will briefly describe the different needs determination methods listing advantages and disadvantages of each. For someone primarily interested in the methodology, and who wants to know what's fastest, or most reliable, or cheapest, this is the place to begin.

The final chapter will pull together all the loose ends, including the fact that overall, the monograph is intended to provide the criminal justice administrator with an understanding of the concepts of needs analysis, data analysis, and cost/benefit analysis.

CHAPTER ONE

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS - THE BIG PICTURE

> "The amount of contraband entering this prison is increasing. What we need is a good training course in contraband control."
>
> "Everytime I want a specific court record, it takes days to get it. What we need is a good training course in records processing."
>
> "The incident reports coming across my desk are horrible -- misspellings, poor sentence structure, the whole bit. What we need is a good training course in report writing."

And on, and on, and on. Statements, like the above, are made daily by criminal justice administrators faced with real problems. Training is often the suggested "cure." But is it the fastest cure or even the best? Before answering these questions, two broader issues need to be dealt with:

- Are the jobs within the organization clearly defined?
- Is the assessment of needs for the long or short term?

ARE THE JOBS CLEARLY DEFINED

A basic part of needs analysis is doing a job analysis. Before even thinking about training, the criminal justice administrator needs to be sure he/she completely understands the job. This is true even if he/she has been a probation, police, court, corrections, etc., officer. The need to clearly identify the job is being mandated in many circumstances by the courts and various administrative agencies, such as the EEOC. In a critical case, Kirkland v. New York State Department of Corrections, 374 F. Supp. 1361 (S.D.N.Y. 1974), the court said:

> The cornerstone of the construction of a content valid examination is the job analysis. Without such an analysis to single out the critical knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the job, their importance relative to each other, and the level of proficiency demanded as to each attribute, a test constructor is aiming in the dark and can only hope to achieve job relatedness by blind luck.

While this case concerned construction of a promotional exam, the language is equally, if not more, applicable to training. What, then is a job analysis? A job analysis is no more or less than a process of systematically gathering job information. The techniques for doing so are varied, but usually include: questionnaires/interviews; identification of critical behavior incidents; diary or log of individual activities; observation; activity samples; and check lists or inventories. Each of these techniques has its own advantages and disadvantages, and the criminal justice administrator should, at a minimum, review the Handbook For Analyzing Jobs, U. S. Department of Labor, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. In fact, a review of court decisions leads us to suggest that job analysis experts, whenever possible, be used in conducting a job analysis to ensure the process is properly completed. If experts cannot be used, then the criminal justice administrator should do it him/her self. Some guidelines to assist follow:

1. Try to get information on the duties performed from as many sources as possible, i.e. superiors, peers, subordinates, and outside experts;

2. Breakdown any observed tasks into a set of skills, attitudes, and knowledge;

3. Know what proficiency is required (i.e. in firearms is 70% or 80% proficiency required);

4. Know what kinds of priority you are attaching to components, skills, knowledge, and the reasons for the priorities;

5. When you are all done, see if you can satisfactorily describe the job to someone who is unfamiliar with it.

In any event, conducting a job analysis means more than just asking people what they do. The skills, the tools, and the proficiency aspects of the job must also be included.

A job analysis is not "quick and dirty," but requires diligent observation and documentation. It can be a long process, but the pay-offs are tremendous.

When the critical knowledge, skills and attitudes of a job are known, the identification of training needs becomes easier, more reliable and valid.

Once job analyses are prepared for all positions for which training is contemplated, then different time perspectives in doing a "needs" assessment should be contemplated.

The time perspective for a systematic approach to improving the abilities of all members in the organization would have to be long range. Conversely, an observable deficiency that materially affects the operation of the organization would require a short range time perspective.

LONG OR SHORT TERM NEEDS ANALYSIS

The difference between long range and short range analysis is not just the time frame, but also includes what methodology may be most appropriate to use.

LONG RANGE

In doing long range analysis, there are more sophisticated options available. Doing longe range analysis also allows time for more than one method to be used, thereby verifying the data. Some methods are only useful in the long term because the data is cumulative, i.e. performance appraisal data and/or records data.

Criminal justice administrators should always have a long range perspective precisely because of the crisis nature of their jobs. By looking to the long term and trying to assess needs on how to get better at what they are doing, the short term crisis, while still significant, does not become paralyzing. By reviewing where they are and where they want to go, there is the opportunity for improvement. Foreseeing the opportunities/liabilities of their present status, points out possible changes in directions. Or to use the old cliche, "Those who fail to learn from the past, are condemned to repeat it."

Now, in the long range, the needs analysis for the organization may be:

- What are our strengths;
- What are our weaknesses
- What are the trends in the courts;
- What is society demanding;
- Where have we gone wrong in the past.

Or for the unit of the organization:

- What do we do well;
- Where could we do better;
- Are we a long term need.

Or for the individual:

- What aspirations does he/she have;
- Where are the strengths/weaknesses;
- What experiences does he/she have;
- How can this person best contribute to the organization.

The answers to these questions are not the quick answers, but the long term concerns that require good information. A laundry list of "needs" is useless in answering these questions because it becomes a want/wish list rather than verifiable data. Also, in answering these questions, there is no one source that can be utilized. In some cases, performance records may be useful, in others, interviews may be more important, and in still others, group analysis may be the answer. In total, a combination of many techniques may give the long range planning data needed to design the training course. The long term focus is the difference between what we are now and what we want to be in the future -- getting better!

SHORT RANGE

The short range needs analysis is usually the result of a "problem" that someone wants solved. In many cases, that someone doesn't want an analysis, he/she

already "knows" what is wrong. This is where the "shoot from the hip" training courses originate along with their unique problems.

A more "legitimate" short range problem may be in the civil liability areas:

- Failure To Train - The administrator has a duty to train officers and that training must be documented. Agencies have been found negligent in their failure to train in: use of firearms, recognition of need for medical care, and department policies and procedures.

- Negligent Employment - Liability arises when the plaintiff can show that the officer who injured him was unfit for appointment, and that the appointing authority knew or should have known of this unfitness.

- Failure To Direct - The administrator has a duty to issue written policies and procedures. The negligence to do so must be the proximate cause of plaintiff's injuries.

- Negligent Supervision - The administrator may be held liable for negligent supervision if there was an affirmative legal duty to supervise subordinates and the supervisor's failure to do so constituted negligence that was the proximate cause of injuries.

- Negligent Entrustment - If an officer is incompetent, inexperienced, or reckless with an entrusted chattel and it results in harm to an individual, the supervisor (entrustor) may be liable if he/she knew of the risk created by the entrustment.

- Negligent Assignments - A supervisor who knows or should know that an officer is unfit for a sensitive assignment, should re-assign the officer to a non-sensitive position.

- Negligent Retention - If an officer is unfit to be retained and is retained even though the supervisor knows or should know of the officer's unfitness, then the supervisor may be negligent for that retention.

Problems in liability areas are usually "discovered" on an emergency basis, and immediate attention to what is going to be done to rectify the problem is necessary. Again, training may be the answer, but a quick short range analysis might identify a more appropriate solution.

Ideally, short range needs analysis would be just as well documented and verified as long range. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case. Short

range analysis techniques may be group problem-solving, or superior-peer-subordinate interviews. The emphasis is usually critical and there is often only enough time to check a couple of data sources before something must be done, i.e. in the case of a mass demonstration for police, or a prison uprising for corrections, a quick check needs to be made on the amount of knowledge individual officers have with regard to chemical agents. This quick analysis, followed by on-the-spot training, could prove critical in the lawsuits that invariably follow such demonstrations.

SUMMARY

Up to this point, we have seen that training is often suggested as a "cure, " a Pavlovian response. We have also stated that before any training is done, a jobs analysis should be conducted. This is to prevent the detective from having to learn the radar gun, the corrections-security officer from learning how to prepare a press release, and the probation officer from learning how to use a word processor. Finally, we looked at the long/short term perspectives of needs analysis and saw that some needs analysis methodologies may be more suited for the long term than the short term, but both perspectives were important. In the next chapter, we will look at people problems as a way to begin understanding needs analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

PERFORMANCE OR TRAINING PROBLEM

Every criminal justice manager has suffered through "people" problems with his/her employees. These problems may range from an employee being absent from work, to an employee being at work but not doing the job required. Analyzing these people problems in order to increase performance and to overcome them, requires that a number of key questions be considered.

ARE JOB EXPECTATIONS CLEAR?

One major reason for performance deficiency is the fact of unclear and, in some cases, unknown job requirements. The job analysis is critical at this stage. (Review Chapter One for details of job analysis.) There is a significant and critical difference between saying, "Go do a good job," and saying "A good job is _____." In Figure Two, we have presented several examples of what a good job is.

Figure Two

EXAMPLES OF JOB EXPECTATIONS	
Police Officer:	. Reduced serious accident rate in patrol district
	. Reduced B & E rate in patrol district
	. Increased percentage of arrests that survive preliminary screenings
Corrections Officer:	. Reduced number of incidents occuring in areas of control involving contraband
	. Reduced number of inmates in control area who attempt to commit suicide
	. Reduced number of assaults between inmates

Probation Officer:	. Reduced recidivist rate . Increased percentage of clients who achieve seventy percent more of their performance plan . Improved feedback from community and rehabilitation centers

Unfortunately, criminal justice is usually perceived as being a service, and therefore, it is too often thought to be difficult, if not impossible, to define a "good job." This premise should not be accepted. Improved job performance will come about most easily when the performance expectations are spelled out in advance for each employee.

If job expectations are not clear, then there must be some sort of counseling, coaching or goal-setting activities initiated by the supervisor. (It is possible the supervisor needs training in how to set job expectations.) But clearly, the employee can not be accountable for poor performance if he or she has not been adequately told what to do.* In Chart One, we see that the solution(s) to the question of job expectations are either goal-setting, coaching or counseling. If however, the job expectations are clear, then there is another question that the criminal justice manager must consider.

ARE THERE ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO DO THE JOB?

To expect good performance without providing adequate resources/support, is to set oneself up for disappointment. An employee cannot be expected to do the job well if he/she is not given adequate "tools" to perform. For example, it's

* Establishing job expectations is not an easy task and the author does not wish to be accused of treating the area lightly. However, the thrust of this monograph is training needs analysis, not setting job expectations, and the thrust of this chapter is distinguishing between performance and training problems.

unrealistic to expect a corrections officer not to allow escapes if the facility is so old and security so poor that anyone could escape. Likewise, a probation officer will have problems with performance if he/she is not provided with adequate community resources to assist the rehabilitation of clients.

Now adequate does not mean abundant. A brand new vehicle is not needed each year for detectives anymore than a secretary needs a new typewriter every year. However, the level and quality of resources provided to employees will impact job performance.

Some agencies will not have the necessary financial or other resources to give their employees. In those cases, governing bodies and managers have to be told to expect lower performance. If the correct amounts or proper "tools" are not present, then the employee cannot be expected to maximize his/her performance.

This question of adequate resources can also be conceptualized by referring to Chart One. Here we see that if adequate support is not present, the manager/organization has the obligation to provide the adequate manpower, equipment, or supplies. If this is impossible, then it is extra important to provide support in terms of encouragement, backing up the employee in their efforts to get resources, or merely by being available to the employee as a supportive figure.

If there are adequate resources and clear job expectations, then another question needs to be answered.

IS THERE A LACK OF MOTIVATION?

All people are motivated all the time by needs that they are attempting to satisfy. To be highly motivated, to extend the effort needed to keep a job or perform well, people must be able to meet the needs that are important to them on or through their jobs. Therefore, the key is for management to design jobs with people in such a way that (a) each employee can meet his or her own

needs, while (b) at the same time achieving the goals of the organization. This theory is known as goal congruence. The idea is to try to align the employee's needs with the organizational needs, and therefore, maximize satisfaction for the employee and performance for the organization. Inability to meet important needs will produce frustration which in turn leads to either aggressive behavior (insubordination, union militancy, petty complaints and grievances, resistance to change, discourteous or abusive treatment of clients, and so on) or withdrawal behavior (high turnover, tardiness, abuse of sick leave, willingness to do only the minimum necessary to get by, cynicism or dispirited employees).

These are phenomenas that most criminal justice managers have seen or experienced in the work place. Many of the problems that we have in job performance are due to the fact that while people are motivated, they are not motivated to achieve the ends of the organization. Rather, because of the way they are managed or treated, they are motivated to do things to the organization that are negative in nature.

Many of today's performance problems are due to the frustration of what are typically known as higher order needs, the need for employees to self-actualize, to receive some satisfaction from their jobs. This frustration may be due to a number of causes, such as poor matches between people and jobs, or perhaps just the nature of the work. For instance, law enforcement in the "ghetto" may have so many negative parts to it, that the officer cannot see the positive aspects of what he/she is doing. The need for management is to try to understand this frustration and to provide a chance for employees to get control of their own jobs. This may be accomplished by involving the employees in certain types of participative exercises, such as: increasing their authority and responsibility, making them in effect, managers of their own work. Behavioral scientists often remark: "People tend to support and be committed to those things they've had a part in creating."

If, however, we find that motivation is not the problem, that resources/ support necessary to do the job are present and that the job requirements are clear, then there is one final question that we need to be concerned with before looking at training as a solution to a problem.

IS THE ABILITY TO DO THE JOB WELL PRESENT IN THE EMPLOYEE(S)?

Whenever looking at a job, there are certain dimensions that need to be considered before a manager is able to say an employee can or cannot do the job. These dimensions are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA's) necessary to complete the job well. KSA's are determined through a job analysis which was discussed earlier.

Therefore, even if an employee has clear job expectations, adequate resources and high motivation , if that employee is not able, physically or mentally, to do the job, then training is not the answer -- improved selection standards may be. Obviously, for some physical conditions, training may help, but what we are discussing are cases of non-correctable physical problems, likewise for non-correctable knowledge cases. However, in the area of skill development, given adequate physical and mental ability, we may have a training problem if all other questions on job expectations, adequate resources, and motivation were answered affirmatively.

Assuming now that we have a training problem, i.e. the discrepancy between the ideal and actual performance is a knowledge, skill, or attitude deficiency, then how do we determine what is missing. Strategies in needs assessment are discussed in the next chapter.

CHART ONE

QUESTION	RESPONSE	POSSIBLE SOLUTION
Are job requirements clear? (Job standards, job descriptions, individual goals, are written down.)	NO	. Try: .. goal setting .. coaching .. counseling
	YES	. Go to next question
Are there adequate resources/support mechanisms to do the job?	NO	. Try: .. providing adequate resources (equipment, manpower supplies) .. providing support (encouragement, backing up, presence)
	YES	. Go to next question
Is the employee motivated? (Does he/she get interested, show initiative, always "ready to go")	NO	. Try: .. providing positive rewards .. removing positive rewards for negative performance .. discipline if everything else has failed
	YES	. Go to next question
Does the employee have the ability to do the job?		
. physical? (validated physical criteria present)	NO	. Try: .. improving selection standards .. redefining the job
	YES	. Go to next question
. mental?	NO	. Try: .. improving selection standards .. redefining the job
	YES	. Try: .. training

CHAPTER THREE

TECHNIQUES OF TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To assess training needs, the criminal justice administrator has a wide variety of methods available. In order to make the assessment more valid, it should be done on the basis of a job analysis (see Chapter One). In order to make the assessment more reliable, a number of methods might be used prior to any formalized programs being developed. In doing a needs assessment, it is important that the three major purposes of such an assessment are not forgotten:

1) Identify specific problem areas. In order to develop a training program there must be a clear understanding of what the problem is from both employee and supervisor.

2) Obtain organization commitment. While most everyone agrees that training is a desirable activity, this approval should not be confused with commitment. When a training program can be linked directly with improved performance or increased productivity, commitment usually follows.

3) Develop "before" data for effective evaluation. Another reason for conducting a needs analysis is that it provides some initial data describing the situation before training. The trainer can use this information to create reasonable milestones to measure training success.

Needs assessment methodologies can be of either a non-structured or structured approach. The following sections distinguish between non-structured and structured approaches as well as methodologies within each approach according to the relative advantages/disadvantages of each. Chart Two, at the end of the chapter, briefly categorizes each structured technique by difficulty, time to administer, relative cost, and reliability.

NON-STRUCTURED APPROACHES

These are usually informal, non-documented approaches, that occur day-to-day, and any of which may yield "needs" data to the criminal justice administrator.

INFORMAL FEEDBACK

This is "hallway" information received from agency personnel concerning problems in procedures and operations or in the performance of individuals.

Advantages

- Always present to those who listen.
- May be earliest indicator of problems.
- May be the only information that will be received (For instance, the police officer who abuses prisoners and is lucky enough not to have a lawsuit filed -- yet, will often be discussed in locker room talk, or, for courts, it may be the "hallway" complaints regarding clerical staff who are unable to produce the correct information when requested.)

Disadvantages

- Hearsay -- much of the information may be non-specific, derogatory, and biased for unknown reasons.
- Usually no documentation.

INFORMAL OBSERVATION

This is information received by observing the work, the employees, and the work product. It may or may not be documentated, such as: personal friction between employees; inattention to work; failure in informational flows -- up, down, or across; and leadership not held by appointed leaders. Any or all of these may be symptomatic of a problem that may have training as a solution.

Advantages

- It is usually observable behavior versus "hearsay."

Disadvantages

- The root cause of problems may be unobservable, or it may be open to interpretation by the observer.
- If not documentated, it is hard to remember and use for program justification.

GROUP PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Often occurs at staff meetings when problems are identified in organizational operations and worked through to identify solutions.

Advantages

- Problem-solving techniques usually ensure that root problems are identified.
- "Shooting from the hip" training solutions are minimized.

Disadvantages

- Requires staff to know and utilize problem-solving techniques.
- Without documentation, is still difficult to "sell" the solution.
- Not a regular formalized process. More "hit-and-miss."

FEEDBACK FROM CITIZENS OR CLIENTS

This is becoming more and more common and also more structured. Used informally, the information is sketchy and incomplete. When an active role is assumed by the criminal justice agency in getting the feedback, the quantity and quality improve.

Advantages

- A great deal of positive public relations can result from soliciting and listening to this type of feedback.
- If the data is complete enough, the needs identified may be the most critical in terms of agency survival.

Disadvantages

- Usually this is unstructured, "hit-and-miss" data.
- Needs are not really identified -- problems are.

ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENTS/PLANS

These can be records and reports (observations, citizen complaints, slowdown in productivity) or projected changes in mission, structure, personnel or procedures. In other words, the data is available but needs to be put into some form if it is to be useful in establishing a training need. For instance, the

building of an addition to a jail may signal the need for a correctional officer training course.

Advantages

- Usually hard data versus hearsay or even observation.

Disadvantages

- If this data is not systematically looked at, important information may be lost.
- The data needs interpretation (absenteeism is not a training need, but a warning or symptom of a greater problem that, again, may be a training need.)

Whatever the advantages of non-structured techniques, their biggest disadvantage is a lack of systematic data collection. This is not the case with the more formalized, structured approaches.

STRUCTURED APPROACHES

These are more formalized, scheduled, and/or documented methods of obtaining training needs data.

TRAINING COMMITTEE

A representative group of employees meets on a regular basis to identify training needs within their particular area of expertise. Needs are surfaced as group needs rather than as individual needs. Permits synthesis of different viewpoints.

Advantages

- Needs are generated by specialists who are in touch with changes in the field and the needs of fellow employees.
- Provides on-going assessment of whether the needs are being met by the training provided.
- Is a systematic appraisal of the field.
- Builds support for training.

Disadvantages

- Often difficult to achieve consensus on needs within a group.
- The group may not be in touch with needs of employees.
- Individualized needs are not surfaced.
- Results may be difficult to quantify.

MENU SURVEY

A list of course offerings with "catalog" descriptions which is circulated to employees, who nominate themselves for training. A variation of this method is to circulate the list to supervisors and have them check the training for their employees. To maximize the utility, a section on "Training Needs of Co-Workers" and a way to prioritize the training should be added.

Advantages

- Is quick and easy to administer, little effort required by training specialists or supervisors.
- Employees' attitudes toward their selected training is usually positive.
- Employees may have a good idea of their needs, particularly in terms of career development.
- Results are easy to quantify and summarize.
- Inexpensive.

Disadvantages

- Limits courses to those listed.
- Selected training is not necessarily directly job-related.
- Is usually restricted to annual needs; no mechanism for long-range planning.
- Questions may not reflect the "real" problem.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

A written set of questions about topics which represent potential training areas. The form may or may not ask for judgement as to whether training is needed.

Advantages

- Open-ended questions allow for original, unlimited in-put.
- Unanticipated data may be gathered.
- Can be geared to specific knowledge/skill areas for particular job-related needs.

Disadvantages

- Data is difficult and time-consuming to tabulate and analyze because of the range of responses.
- The possibility for no response, or not enough, is high.
- Both questions and responses may be misinterpreted.

WRITTEN TEST

A series of questions, exercises, or other means of measuring the knowledge, skills, intelligence or attitudes of an individual or group against selected standards.

Advantages

- Is an objective measure of knowledge that doesn't depend on supervisor, employee, or training officer perceptions.
- Data is easy to gather, tabulate and analyze.
- Is easy to administer to large populations.
- Useful as a diagnostic tool for identifying specific deficiencies.
- Particularly useful to measure knowledge skill deficiencies.

Disadvantages

- Restricts data to the subject area covered by the test; may not reveal all deficiencies.
- Doesn't allow for input on what employees or supervisors may think is a need.
- Can be perceived as threatening.
- Tests are not available for many situations, and construction of valid tests is difficult.
- Results give clues and are not conclusive; possession of knowledge does not guarantee application on the job.
- Standards may be arbitrary and not validated.
- Some employees just do not take tests well.

INTERVIEW

A series of person-to-person questions. Coverage may include questioning the employee about their own skills deficiencies and developmental needs, or the skills, deficiencies and developmental needs of their subordinates, co-workers, supervisors, and the organization as a whole.

Frequently, individual interviews are used as a means for obtaining initial information, followed by a survey questionnaire with more specific questions related to isolated topics.

Advantages

- Personal contact allows for follow-up and clarification of questions.
- Format allows maximum opportunity for free expression of opinion and giving of suggestions.
- Unanticipated problems may become known through the questioning process.
- Feelings, causes, and possible solutions to problems may be revealed.
- Non-verbal cues may be observed and recorded.

Disadvantages

- Is time consuming and difficult to administer to large populations.
- Unless the interview is carefully constructed, data may be biased.
- When more than one interviewer is used, the interview schedule, as well as interviewer reliability, becomes a concern.
- Results may be difficult to quantify.
- Interviewee may feel "on the spot."
- When a sample is used, it may reflect minority opinion.

The following two structured approaches are among the most reliable and informative in terms of assessing training needs. Unfortunately, both of the following depend on a valid initial construction if the data derived from them is to be useful.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Performance appraisals are meetings between a supervisor and his/her subordinate to discuss the job performance. Herein is the problem: many currently used performance evaluation instruments do not lend themselves to usefulness in the training needs assessment area. For instance, departments that utilize trait-ratings, ranking scales, essays, forced choice, or behaviorally anchored systems, may nullify the utility of the appraisal interview because of such instrument. In other words, these "traditional" systems are subject to two significant problems: one being the subjectivity that is allowed to the appraiser, and the other being the relevance of the criteria used in appraising job performance. However, departments that utilize goal-oriented, performance-based, or management-by-objectives appraisal systems, can utilize the appraisal instrument in a training needs assessment. For those departments who utilize these more modern, technically sound systems, there is a great deal of valid data that can be derived from the performance evaluation interview.

Advantages

- Job-relatedness of training is insured through linkage to job performance deficiencies.
- Breaks jobs into segments manageable both for training and appraisal purposes.
- Allows input from training specialists on selection of methods to meet identified needs.

Disadvantages

- Forms generally provide data only on performance in "common denominator" skill areas (i.e. oral communication) rather than specific KSA's.

- Translation of performance deficiency to training need is still necessary.
- Data must be analyzed, and some subjective biases on what is "needed" may occur.

ASSESSMENT CENTER

Techniques for evaluating individuals' skills and abilities through trained observation of their behavior in standardized, simulated job situations. Critical job dimensions from a job analysis are decided on and observable anchors are developed in advance. Assessment centers are used widely in appraisal of supervisory, managerial, and human relations skills.

Advantages

- Simulation of job situations and use of several evaluators makes more objective assessment of skills or deficiencies possible.
- Provides a means for assessment of skills or potential which employees may not have a chance to demonstrate on the job.
- Best data available.

Disadvantages

- Is time-consuming and difficult to administer for large populations.
- Requires qualified assessors/evaluators.
- Is not appropriate for evaluation of non-observable skills or attitudes.
- Expensive to conduct, even for small populations.

CONCLUSION

Two different approaches are used by the criminal justice administrator in determining training needs, non-structured and structured. The non-structured approach is basically an informalized feedback process, that will yield data on a "hit or miss" basis. The structured approach, which is much more formalized, includes two methodologies which yield the most reliable and valid data -- the performance appraisal and the assessment center. A combination of methods is always

preferable to any one singular method to insure the validity and reliability of the data received.

STRUCTURED TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS:
TYPE AND COMPARISON OF CHARACTERISTICS

TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS			
	Difficulty In Administering	Time Involved	Reliability	Cost
Training Committee	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Menu Survey	Low	Low	Low	Low
Open-Ended Questionnaire	Low	Medium	Low to Medium	Low
Written Test	Low	Medium	Medium	Low
Interview	High	High	Medium to High	Medium
Performance Appraisal	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Assessment Center	High	High	High	High

MENU SURVEY EXAMPLE

NAME _____ DATE _____

The completed form should be forwarded to _____

SEMINAR INTEREST IDENTIFICATION SHEET AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Seminar Titles	Hours	High Level of Interest	Moderate Level of Interest	Low Level of Interest	Previously Attended
Career Development Workshop	16				
Management and Leadership	24				
Decision-Making	24				
Management of Time	8				
Conflict Resolution	8				
Report Writing	8				
Communication Skills	16				
Public Speaking	16				
Working in Groups and Teams	8				
Goal Setting	16				
Conducting Performance Evaluation Interviews	16				

PROGRAM SPECIFIC OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Planning/Management-By-Objectives Needs Assessment

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer fully. Anything you write will help us understand your needs. Don't be afraid to wander around the subject. Don't worry about typing. Longhand is fine.

1. What does the phrase "Management-By-Objectives" mean to you?

2. Have you ever worked anywhere where this approach to planning and managing was used? Did it work? To what extent?

3. Why do you want this workshop? What do you hope to be able to do when it is over that you can't do now?

4. How do you think your program would be improved if you were skilled in the use of the management-by-objectives approach?

5. What management problems are you experiencing?
(Please explain thoroughly)

   a) Ineffective use of resources

   b) Lack of accountability among staff

TRAINING NEEDS SURVEY

(Supervisory)

NAME:
DUTY ASSIGNMENT:
LENGTH OF SERVICE:

1. In what specific areas would you like to see your subordinates most improve their level of performance?

2. What are the causes for needed improvement in these areas?

3. In what areas would you like to see your subordinates develop a proficiency that does not now exist?

4. In order to raise your subordinates performance to a satisfactory level, what type of assistance do you need and from whom do you need it?

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYZING DATA, COSTS, AND BENEFITS

In this chapter the analysis of data, costs, and benefits is to be discussed. Needs analysis data is useless unless it is somehow put together in a way that is useful. The first part of this chapter will discuss "data" and how to use it. Cost analysis, a second thrust of this chapter, is targeted at motivating the manager to do needs assessment by looking at the costs incurred by not doing needs assessment. A third thrust of the chapter is the positive aspects of needs assessment in terms of "saved" resources, "improved" resources and the opportunity for a clear picture of the organization.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data is just that--data. To collect information is an exercise in futility if meaningful use of it is minimized. Most people can recall at least one time in their life where "everyone knew something was going to happen but nothing was done to prevent it," and a bad condition resulted. Pearl Harbor is often mentioned as one of these situations where supposed intelligence was available predicting the attack, but nothing was done to stop it or even mitigate it. The same can happen to the criminal justice manager who looks at training needs analysis data and fails to properly analyze the information for decision-making.

In order to use the data generated, some meaning has to be given to it, i.e. it must be categorized and weighted in some fashion.

Categorizing data sounds easy, but too often is done improperly. For instance, if in corrections a "menu survey" is conducted and supervisors rate contraband control number one, officers personally rate minimizing critical incidents number one, but other peer officers rate cell searches number one, can these be categorized under one title "Observation and Detection of Contraband," or are there, in fact,

three categories? In the example presented above, one categorization seems appropriate, but each training person needs to know their particular situation and may make three categories. One way to assist the categorizing of the data is to move from the general to the specific. For example:

GENERAL	MORE SPECIFIC	SPECIFIC
Traffic	Accident Control	Selective Enforcement
Dealing With Juveniles	Counseling	Empathing Training
Riot Control	Use of Chemical Agents	Tear Gas Gun

Another way to have the data "make sense" is to weight it in some manner. Weighting is merely ascribing importance to data items. If, in the training manager's mind, there are certain critical tasks and their personnel need to perform well, and one of these tasks shows up in the data, then a training project may well be warranted. Data can also be weighted within categories, i.e. counseling clients might be weighted more heavily than preparing pre-sentence reports or vice versa.

One final thought on data analysis might be to analyze data by cost to the agency for ignoring the problem identified. This may get scary but may prove to be the most efficient data analysis of all. Whatever mechanism is chosen, the training needs data has got to be put in useful formats for planning purposes. Categorizing and weighting are two such formats. The criminal justice training administrator may use either/or both of the aforementioned methods or some other method as long as the data is not just gathered--it is used.

COST ANALYSIS

The focus of training needs assessment cost analysis will remain on needs assessment, not on training outcomes.

First, there is the "value added versus resources committed" analysis. Here

the concept of accurate needs assessment versus "armchair" or "SWAG" assessment is the focal point. It is obviously "cheaper" to armchair or make Scientific Wild Ass Guesses than it is to commit resources to really determine needs. However, "cheaper" on the front end means expense on the back end. This is analogous to buying a cheap used car that later will require great expense to keep running. The value added by doing the needs analysis right pays off by not having to do it over and by better determining what needs really exist.

Another way to look at this cost analysis is in "value lost versus resources not committed." If no needs analysis is done, not even armchair or SWAG, then the value lost can reach astronomical proportions. Morale and efficiency are the first to cost the agency, but true dollar losses follow in the form of mis-used equipment, mis-used people (turnover) and lawsuits. Again, it is obviously "cheaper" at a point in time not to do needs analysis regularly, but in the long run problems don't go away--good people might.

Finally, in cost analysis the following formula might prove instructive:

$$\text{WORTH} = \frac{\text{Value of an Accomplishment}}{\text{Cost of the Behavior}}$$

Any training cost must be weighed against the potential value to the organization of increased employee productivity and job performance. (T. F. Gilbert)

BENEFIT ANALYSIS

This is really an extension of cost analysis but from the plus side. By doing an accurate needs assessment, the benefits derived are substantial. First, there is the whole idea of saved resources. When members of an organization take the time to look for ways to improve either participants in the organization or the output of the organization, they have in fact saved resources. These savings can

be expressed as "good performers," "supportive and creative work climate," "organizational identity." This last point--"organizational identity"--is becoming increasingly important in today's public service cutback environment. There are no police, corrections, or judicial organizations safe from the public nor should there be any. Each agency must justify daily its existance. By assessing training needs and developing ways to overcome these problems agencies save themselves.

Another substantial benefit of doing needs assessment is the opportunity it provides for seeing the agency clearly. Many managers, public and private, wear what could be called "rose colored" glasses. By taking a hard look at what really is or is not happening in an agency--needs analysis--the real picture becomes clear. No longer is everything a bed of roses, there also exist the thorns. Needs analysis can help make the agency better which should be every managers goal.

CONCLUSION

In this short monograph several ideas are threaded throughout. First needs assessment is something that cannot be ignored or done poorly. Data must be collected and analyzed BEFORE proceeding with training or other alternatives. Secondly, not every problem is going to be or should ever attempt to be corrected by training. Improved selection procedures, organizational design, and improved management practices are just a few alternatives that should be explored before training. Finally, the cost/benefit ratios all seem to work in favor of needs assessment. Whether the needs assessment equals dollars saved by doing the right thing or dollars saved by not losing the wrong case; needs assessment is worth the effort.

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